DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 056 011 TE 002 599

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TITLE You and Your Charge. A Brief Handbook for High School Tutors Working Under the Waianae Model Cities Tutorial Plan.
PUB DATE Apr 71
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Cross Age Teaching; English Instruction; *Instructional Materials; Language Arts; *Language Development; *Reading Development; *Teaching Guides

ABSTRACT

This handbook is intended to provide some basic guidelines for the high school age tutor of young children. Areas discussed include the development of language in children, organization of teaching time, and use of instructional materials. (CK)

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YOU AND YOUR CHARGE

A brief handbook for high school tutors working under the Waianae Model Cities Tutorial Plan

by

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April, 1971

TE 002 599

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TO: My dedicated young friends of the Waianae Model Cities Tutorial Plan who are changing to educate and educating to change.

INTRODUCTION

Here are just a few thoughts on the questions and comments formulated by our Monday night sessions. This handbook is intended for you, the tutor. It is not meant to be a heavy treatise on educational planning and methods, but it is intended to provide some very simple, basic thoughts and guidelines for the young high school age tutor who needs answers now.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT LANGUAGE

One of the vital questions asked by the volunteer tutor is: "How do children develop language? How can we help them to develop language?"

Books, doctoral dissertations, popular articles and textbooks have been written on those two apparently simple questions, so there will be no presumptuous undertaking to answer such deep questions in the space of a few pages. However, some considerations include: the idea that language consists of two aspects: spoken and written. Some skills needed in the development of written language include: (Just a few are listed here.)

1. The ability to listen.
2. The ability to use strange word attack skills to determine the meaning of strange words.
3. The use of context in determining the meaning of strange words
4. The ability to follow directions carefully.
5. The ability to make inferences from what one reads.
6. The development of the ability to read critically and make judgments on material read.
7. The development of proper study skills which enable a person to utilize the most of research materials provided such as atlases, encyclopedia, dictionaries, etc.
8. The ability to read to gain information.
9. The ability to read for pleasure.

10. The development of vocabulary to help us understand what we read.

11. The acquisition of prefixes and suffixes, antonyms, and homonyms which help us to intensify meanings of words.

In the development of spoken language the following skills are some which are considered to be essential:

1. The ability to say what we mean.

2. The use of proper diction and standard English (English that is clearly understood and grammatically correct).

3. The ability to use vocabulary which helps us to mean what we say.

4. The use of proper articulation to help others understand what we mean.

5. The ability to use appropriate speech patterns.

6. The ability to remember that there are really two types of spoken language: formal (what we use in school and with people that we don't know too well or in business dealings) and informal (the language we use when we talk to our friends or relatives, with people who understand that we are just having fun with language). We must develop the ability to know when to select the proper aspect of language and make it fit the situation.

Spoken language develops through interaction and a discovery of a need to communicate. If the development of spoken language is the goal you have set for your tutee's future, then structure your sessions so you are continuously finding ways for the youngster to express himself orally.

How do children learn to read?

Reading as such involves so many aspects that believe it or not, even adults haven't really discovered the way all children learn to read. Only educated guesses can be made concerning the many different ways that reading is learned. Some children learn to read by learning their letters, sounds, word parts and putting them into words and the words into sentences. Some children learn to read by listening to what is said and remembering the way words sound

when they hear them. Other children learn to read when they can outline, feel, and look at the letters all together in a single block and then know the words

Children can learn to read better through practice in their reading skills. This is where you as the tutor fit into the educational picture. When we can help them learn more words to add to their vocabulary, children can increase their reading skills because they are understanding more of what they read. Children can also improve their reading comprehension as well as vocabulary by having lots of different experiences that much of their reading mentions...i.e., if they are talking about animals and the children have never been to a zoo or seen the animals, there is very little that has much meaning for them.

Some ways you may help to develop language is through imitation and experience. Present a new word, help the child learn not only how it looks, but when it is used correctly in sentences. If you can't provide the real experience, use lots of pictures to show the very many things that involve us in the world around us. By using pictures of various countries, fruit, animal, people, houses, community helpers, etc. and talking about them, you help to build what we call "concepts" which are necessary to the development of a language. Try to help the children not only to find out how things are different, but how they are alike; how each thing belongs in a larger classification. A good example of classification and extension is a book on Tails. Have you thought of all the kinds of tails that could be represented? You may use your initiative. Have you considered what you could do to expand the idea of color, noses, eyes, houses, cars, fish, shells, letters, people, etc.? Use puppets, scrapbooks, pantomimes, homemade plays, ask for verbal descriptions of things, make booklets, etc. The list is endless and your imagination sets the limits. You and your tutee could build lots of books on color, sizes, geometric figures, letters.

Remember:

The development of skills takes a long time. You might divide some of your time to incorporate aspects of the written and spoken language so that you are building on several features at once. Be sure that your tutee has a skill well established before you proceed to build another skill.

PLANNING AND OTHER RELATED AREAS

Other frequently asked questions include: "How do we organize our time?" "What do we do?"

First of all, decide which skill needs attention, then take the time to make plans. How much time can you really give each day? "Block" the time out. Decide on how much you can really do within that space of time to do a really good job. Systematically list what you want to do and estimate how long you think it will take to present the information and teach it well. How much will you do in the area of what we call "the academics"? Will you hear your tutee read or will you read to him? Is it spelling that will need attention?

After you have planned your presentation and implementation time, plan how you will present the material. How much time will you allot for "fun" activities to avoid boring your tutee? Are you going to introduce a new game? Will you need to find old magazines from which to cut pictures? Will you fingerpaint? Do you have an "ace in the hole" to use in case your plans go haywire?

Plan some games which will help you to get "tne academics" across. Plan to incorporate games you may have on hand or make up some new ones. You might even change some old ones around to suit new purposes. (Don't underestimate the power of play. It is a potent educational tool which implements where other activities fail. Sometimes the most direct line to learning is through laughter.) Can you change Bingo into a new form of word game? Although Scrabble games are expensive, perhaps letters cut from magazines and newspapers or printed on pieces of a cardboard box are not...could you use those instead to play a new word game?

Do you enjoy singing or playing a musical instrument? You can use your knowledge to make up little songs which help to teach your student. You don't have to be a writer for "Sesame Street" in order to be successful with your tutee.

(Maybe watching Sesame Street will give you some useful ideas to change to your own purposes.) Perhaps you can work out the teaching of two or three little lines to a ditty. By doing this, you are helping your tutee build memory for words and sequences. You can also help him with his phonics by using rhyming words in your songs. By pooling resources, a few of tutors could collect two or three copies of songs and exchange them with other tutors so that there will be a more complete collection with a minimum amount of effort.

When the children tire of one particular activity, find a change-of-pace activity which will refresh him. He can do something very physical such as hop, jump, run or he may learn to relax like a rag doll. You may work at this activity for a few minutes, then return to the academics.

MATERIALS

"What about materials?" you ask. Remember that these children must be shown about "people, and things" before they can learn at a higher level, the area of the "non-things"...ideas.

Try to incorporate whatever you have at hand to teach about people and things. Anyone having difficulty with measurement? Bring mother's tape measure, dad's metal tape, a set of measuring spoons, measuring cups, etc. Play in the sand on the beach with the measuring cups. Show physically how one quantity can equal another and yet not be shaped just like the other container which holds the quantity. (If you want to know about this theory, read about Jean Piaget's theory of equivalent measure. You'll find the information in the library.)

Art is a wonderful, colorful, exciting and relaxing medium. Use it to good advantage in your teaching. You can teach colors by making up "What is yellow (purple, blue, red, whatever)?" charts. Your tutee can find lots of

things in one particular color and then tell you about the things that are yellow: "the outside of a lemon, the color of butter, the color of a buttercup."

Use art in the making of puppets for a puppet show which could be as simple or complicated as your tutee's interests are. Teach geometric figures. Think of the different ways in which you can teach about square shapes, round shapes, triangular shapes, and diamond shapes. A puppet play can help in teaching reading as well as history. It can also help you to get to know a shy child better: perhaps he prefers to talk to you through his puppet. Encourage him to do so. Art supplies can be what you have at home: egg cartons, paper bags, string, food coloring, starch, bits of colored paper, etc.

If books are not readily available to you, collect labels off the cans on your grocery shelf. (Be sure that the cans have been opened before you take the labels off. Don't get your mother angry at you when she goes to the cupboard and discovers that you have taken all the labels from the cans--you may find yourself eating peas instead of peaches for dessert!) Use those labels to teach reading and English to your tutees. Maybe after the labels are read to you, they may be exchanged for a coke. You can set the limit, your tutee can try to attain his goal of three labels (or whatever) in exchange for a coke with you. (In the language of educators, this is called using rewards to attain a goal. The system works in that it helps the child feel that he is attaining something.)

Don't be afraid to reward accomplishment, no matter how small it seems to be to you. Sometimes it takes just a "Good" or a pat on the hand to show delight in your progress. Sometimes the use of accumulated rewards in exchange for something that the child wants is a good variation of procedure and is still an educationally sound thing to do.

If your students don't write stories, have them tell you a story. Help them to learn to organize their thoughts by showing them that stories have beginnings, middles and endings. For children who have short attention spans, begin with a very short two-sentence story and gradually work into longer, more complicated ones. You might begin with a story about your tutee or anything which interests him.

Sometimes poems are enjoyed by your tutees. Haiku writing is a fun outlet. Maybe your tutee's haiku will be published in TUTEE LOOTEE and he'll have an extra dime in his pocket.

Use your imagination. How can you teach number facts without having your student memorize the answers? Use beans, toothpicks, rice, buttons, pebbles for counters. Work out a number game of hopscotch or baseball with them. Use your playground...the rungs of the colored jungle jim, the slide, the beach. Do many different things, but center them around one thing that he must learn.

Try to base your activities on things which the child finds interesting and challenging. (This may broaden your interests, too.) Use some "If I were..." questions to help determine what his interests are. If he appears to have none, do something to arouse his curiosity. You might be sneaky and hide something in a bag, then have him ask questions to figure out what is in the bag. Or you might make up a riddle to whet his curiosity over what is in the bag, etc.

If your tutee has reading problems, some activities that do not cost money include:

Use your newspaper. Cut out simple comic strips to read and make into a book. At the end of each week, the book can be taken home to be read to members of the family. Cut out large, colorful pictures from the magazine section of the newspaper. The pictures may be used for stories and vocabulary building. Be sure to center your work around your tutee's interests!

Playing ball helps to improve coordination in first, second and third graders. You may also do such things as jumping jacks, playing pitch, shooting baskets--anything which helps him to improve and have fun at the same time.

Crossword puzzles based on the words that your tutee learns are an inexpensive source of vocabulary building. They are a good way to help teach spelling, too. You may build your puzzles around current themes such as Easter, Halloween, Safety, Health, etc.

Cut pictures from magazines, paste the pictures on cardboard, and cut them into puzzle parts. You and your tutee could put the puzzle together. (Using geometric shapes would reinforce learning geometric figures.)

Go to the library. Perhaps the two of you can select a book to look at together. This could be your "quiet time" with your tutee.

Figure out things that will help a child learn to read to follow directions ...or to follow directions by just listening. You may begin with physical activities such as jumping. You may ask the student to jump three times and move into more complex activities such as following directions in Simon Says, making a lei, knitting, or putting a puzzle together. Again, use your many old magazines as sourcebook possibilities...especially those magazines that feature a children's section.

Your upper grade tutees may enjoy the opportunity to solve a simple code. Find out what liquids make invisible ink and work out some secret messages which have to be decoded.

As you become more experienced as a tutor, you will be able to see more possibilities for using all kinds of materials and teaching various lessons.

GOOD LUCK!

TUTOR GUIDELINES

Some guidelines to follow in your everyday teaching include:

1. Be friendly.
2. Be yourself.
3. Know yourself.
4. Remember how you felt when you were the age of your tutee...how you reacted to a loud voice, to commands, to praise, to offers of help, to planning.
5. Be as professional a tutor as you can be. Don't tell other people personal things that the student has told you unless the person is involved as a teacher, another tutor, or a professional person who can help with the tutee's problem.
6. Keep confidences.
7. Be positive. Find good things to say about things your student does. Encourage him.
8. Know what you are doing. Practice before you try something new.
9. Remember that all activities that you plan may not be successful. Take courage. If you fail, try something else. What works with one may not work with another one.
10. Use your imagination. Perhaps some far out way that you use to get a point across or teach something will help that student to learn.
11. Keep a sense of humor. Life has many truly funny things that happen. Don't laugh at your students...laugh with them and at yourself.
12. Admit that you have made a mistake, that you don't know something, but do make the effort to find the answer together.
13. Sometimes teachers are reluctant to give you responsibilities to help their children because they really do not know what you are like. Surprise them. Use the form which shows what you did, how you did it and when. Ask them if

they would go over them with you and make suggestions. (Make three copies, keep one copy, send the teacher one, and give a copy to the parents.)

14. Keep track of what you do--daily:

    Evaluate it--what was good about the activity? What was not so good about the activity? How can you teach something better? Would you use an activity at all again? How did your tutee react?

15. Help your tutee to feel good about himself and the things he does. Praise him for the things he does. Find another way to get him to do the things he won't do.

    Remember, a smile and a loving touch can "gentle" even the wildest horse.

16. Provide alternatives or choices so that a child doesn't feel like he's being "sand bagged" into doing an activity.

17. Show the child you are interested in him as an individual who is worthwhile.